

News Release

For Immediate Release: Saturday, April 4, 2009, 12 noon.

STATEMENT FROM THE AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

The following statement was issued today by Angela Leach, President of the Board of the American Civic Association.

The American Civic Association was founded in 1939 by immigrants who wanted to help those who would come after them pursue the American dream. We are a small, volunteer-based organization that helps people who are working to become citizens and works to promote racial, religious and political harmony.

That this tragedy should have happened in our community, to our friends who only wanted to advance their knowledge and love of America is almost unbearable.

We are stricken with grief and share this grief with the victims' families, our community and the entire nation.

We want to say thank you to the people of the City of Binghamton, to Mayor Ryan, Chief Zikuski, to Governor Paterson and to all those who are helping this community deal with this tragedy. We want to give special thanks to the community agencies that are providing counseling and emergency services to victims and their families.

Most of all we want to express our unending gratitude to those who risked their own safety to bring this situation to an end – not only the Binghamton Police, the Broome County Sheriff's Department and the State Police, but to the volunteers and students and others who endured this terrible moment inside our building.

I want to ask you all please to direct your concerns at this time to the people in this community – those immigrants we serve and the wonderful people who support our organization – as volunteers, teachers and friends. Every ounce of our energies, caring and compassion is going to help those who are suffering through this tragedy and to this community. We ask that you do the same. Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims and their families.

Whatever drove this individual to do what he did, I cannot possibly fathom. But we will come out of our grief and sadness more resolute in our mission and more dedicated than ever to help people realize the dream of American citizenship.

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